

# Historic Environment

## LDP3 EVIDENCE REPORT

Topic Paper • December 2025



# 1. Introduction

**1.1.** This Topic Paper sets out and analyses evidence pertaining to the Historic Environment in East Ayrshire for the purposes of:

- Contributing towards the preparation of the Council's Evidence Report, as part of a wider suite of Topic Papers;
- Highlighting the key historic environment considerations for the production of Local Development Plan 3;
- Informing future site selection within LDP3; and
- Informing LDP3 policy requirements and specifications for the historic environment.

**1.2.** This Topic Paper also sets out the stakeholder engagement and public consultation already undertaken relating to the Historic Environment and how this will inform the conclusions presented in the Evidence Report.

## 2. Legislative and Policy Context: National

### **2.1. National Planning Framework 4**

**2.1.1.** The Historic Environment topic paper corresponds with National Planning Framework 4 **Policy 7.**

#### **NPF4 Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places**

##### Policy Intent:

To protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places.

##### Policy Outcomes:

- The historic environment is valued, protected, and enhanced, supporting the transition to net zero and ensuring assets are resilient to current and future impacts of climate change.
- Redundant or neglected historic buildings are brought back into sustainable and productive uses.

- Recognise the social, environmental and economic value of the historic environment, to our economy and cultural identity.

#### Local Development Plans:

LDPs, including through their spatial strategies, should support the sustainable management of the historic environment. They should identify, protect and enhance valued historic assets and places.

## **2.2. Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment**

2.2.1. Our Past, Our Future is a five-year national strategy for the historic environment, produced by Historic Environment Scotland in 2023. The strategy has three priorities: delivering the transition to net zero; empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places; and building a wellbeing economy. In addition to the overarching priorities, the strategy has a series of guiding principles:

- We must put people at the heart of this strategy.
- We must act on the climate and biodiversity crises.
- We must protect and promote our historic environment.
- We must work collaboratively across sectors.
- We must work together to make good decisions.
- We must nurture and grow an inclusive, diverse, and skilled workforce.

2.2.2. The national strategy for the historic environment sets the overall framework within which we should all be working collaboratively to help deliver upon the document's mission and priorities and principles. These key messages have already been translated into national planning policy via NPF4. The LDP3 Spatial Strategy should also reflect the priorities and principles of the 'Our Past, Our Future' Strategy.

## **2.3. Historic Environment Policy for Scotland**

2.3.1. Historic Environment Scotland has published a Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS), which is non-statutory material guidance to support decision-making at both national and local levels. There are six policies:

1. Decisions affecting any part of the historic environment should be informed by an inclusive understanding of its breadth and cultural significance.

2. Decisions affecting the historic environment should ensure that its understanding and enjoyment as well as its benefits are secured for present and future generations.
3. Plans, programmes, policies and strategies, and the allocation of resources, should be approached in a way that protects and promotes the historic environment. If detrimental impact on the historic environment is unavoidable, it should be minimised. Steps should be taken to demonstrate that alternatives have been explored, and mitigation measures should be put in place.
4. Changes to specific assets and their context should be managed in a way that protects the historic environment. Opportunities for enhancement should be identified where appropriate. If detrimental impact on the historic environment is unavoidable, it should be minimised. Steps should be taken to demonstrate that alternatives have been explored, and mitigation measures should be put in place.
5. Decisions affecting the historic environment should contribute to the sustainable development of communities and places.
6. Decisions affecting the historic environment should be informed by an inclusive understanding of the potential consequences for people and communities. Decision-making processes should be collaborative, open, transparent and easy to understand.

## 3. Legislative and Policy Context: Local

### 3.1. Local Development Plan 2

- 3.1.1. Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) includes five policies specifically aimed at protecting East Ayrshire's built heritage assets and their surroundings and from inappropriate development, whilst sensitively enhancing and maintaining them.
- 3.1.2. **Policy HE1: Listed Buildings** supports the retention and preservation of Listed Buildings and presumes against any development which would have a negative impact on the buildings or their settings, or which would result in their unjustified demolition.
- 3.1.3. **Policy HE2: Conservation Areas** protects East Ayrshire's Conservation Areas by ensuring that development proposals are sympathetic to their character and historic features. This policy is supported by Conservation Area Appraisals, which form non-statutory guidance.

- 3.1.4. Under **Policy HE3: Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefields and other Archaeological and Historic Environment Assets** there is a presumption against development which would adversely impact Scheduled Monuments or the landscape characteristics of a Historic Battlefield. The policy also outlines provisions for the protection of sites of known archaeological value and any archaeological discoveries made in the course of development, supports the restoration of historic buildings at risk, and protects any non-designated historic environment assets with important heritage value.
- 3.1.5. **Policy HE4: Gardens and Designed Landscapes** gives protection to the special historical, architectural and landscape interest of both Inventory and Non-Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes and requires a landscape conservation and management plan to be produced alongside any applications for new development which may affect them. This policy is supported by East Ayrshire's Gardens and Designed Landscapes Non-Statutory Planning Guidance. One of East Ayrshire's Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes (Loudoun) also has its own policy in LDP2 – **Policy TOUR6: Loudoun Castle Estate Garden and designed Landscape** sets out detailed requirements for the sympathetic development of the estate for tourism, and leisure purposes, and is accompanied by a supporting piece of supplementary guidance.
- 3.1.6. **Policy HE5: Enabling Development** sets out the circumstances under which proposals for new development may be deemed acceptable in order to secure funds for the rescue and restoration of a listed building.

## 4. Key definitions

Term	Definition
Conservation area	Conservation areas are areas which have special architectural or historic interest that are considered worthy of protection. Their selection, assessment and designation is carried out by the planning authority. To be designated as a conservation area it must meet the criteria of 'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance', as set out in Section 61 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Scotland) Act 1997.
Gardens and designed landscapes	The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes recognises sites where garden grounds and landscapes have been intentionally laid out for artistic effect which are of national importance. Their selection, assessment and designation is carried out by Historic Environment Scotland. Designed landscapes are managed primarily through the planning process by the appropriate planning authority.
Historic battlefields	The Inventory of Historic Battlefields recognises sites where a nationally important battle took place, soldiers fought and died, and where significant military activities happened. Their selection, assessment and designation is carried out by Historic Environment Scotland. Battlefields are managed primarily through the planning process by the appropriate planning authority.
Historic environment	The historic environment is 'the physical evidence for human activity that connects people with place, linked with the associations we can see, feel and understand'.
Historic environment asset	An asset (or 'historic asset' or 'heritage asset') is a physical element of the historic environment – a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having cultural significance.
Listed building	A listed building is a built structure of 'special architectural or historic interest'. The term 'building' can be defined as 'anything made by people' such as houses, schools, factories, boundary walls, bridges and sculptures. Listing covers the whole of a building or structure including its exterior, interior and any ancillary structures within its curtilage (provided these were constructed before 1 July 1948). Their selection, assessment and designation is carried out by Historic Environment Scotland under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. Listed Buildings are managed primarily through the Listed Building Consent process by the appropriate planning authority.
Scheduled monument	Scheduled monuments are archaeological sites or monuments of national importance that are legally protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Their selection, assessment and designation is carried out by Historic Environment Scotland who maintains the schedule. Works to Scheduled Monuments are regulated by Historic Environment Scotland through their Scheduled Monument Consent process.



## 5. Body of Evidence

### 5.1. East Ayrshire's Historic Environment

- 5.1.1. The landscape and built environment of East Ayrshire reflect a long and storied history, from prehistoric cairns and medieval castles, through agricultural development and the industrial revolution. Historic assets in the local authority area can be found under several protective designations, which include Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and Battlefields, and Gardens and Designed Landscapes.



Photo: Category A Listed Dean Castle, set within Dean Castle Non-Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscape

## 5.2. Listed Buildings

- 5.2.1. As of June 2025, there were 728 Listed Buildings located in East Ayrshire, of which: 45 were Category A Listed; 326 were Category B Listed; and 357 were Category C Listed.<sup>1</sup>
- 5.2.2. The firsts Lists for East Ayrshire were made statutory in 1971 and most of the listed building records will date to this period. However, Kilmarnock Burgh (2002), Stewarton Burgh and Parish (2009) and Dunlop Parish (2005) were re-surveyed. Earlier descriptions are brief and may not explain why the building is of interest for listing. Currently, Historic Environment Scotland provides more detailed listing information for new and recently reviewed records, including photographs and indicative polygon maps.
- 5.2.3. At the time of writing, there were 7 open listing cases in East Ayrshire; the following information on open and recently completed cases has been provided by Historic Environment Scotland:

### Selected recent completed cases (last 3 years)

Ref number	Site name & decision	Links
300072025	Bankhead, 7 Old Glasgow Road, Stewarton – listing proposal. Decision: site does not meet criteria (29/04/2024)	<a href="#">Bankhead, 7 Old Glasgow Road, Stewarton (300072025)</a>
300071846	2, 4, 6 East Main Street and Ranaldcoup Road, Co-op Building – removal request. Removed 7/04/2024	<a href="#">2, 4, 6 East Main Street and Ranaldcoup Road Co-Op Building, Darvel (300071846)</a>
300066980	The Foregate, Kilmarnock – listing proposal. Decision: not assessed, not enough information. (17/07/2023)	<a href="#">The Foregate, Kilmarnock (300066980)</a>
300065450	Mossmark of Oldmill, New Cumnock (LB14249) – removal request. Decision: amend existing listing to include curtilage structures in statutory address. (20/02/2024)	<a href="#">MOSSMARK OF OLDMILL (300065450)</a>
300064836	42 London Road (Formerly Hafton), Kilmarnock (LB35941) – removal request. Decision: current designation is adequate. (20/11/2023)	<a href="#">42 London Road (formerly Hafton) including Boundary Walls and Gatepiers, Kilmarnock (300064836)</a>

### Current (all open cases)

Ref number	Site name & request type	Links
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<sup>1</sup> HES

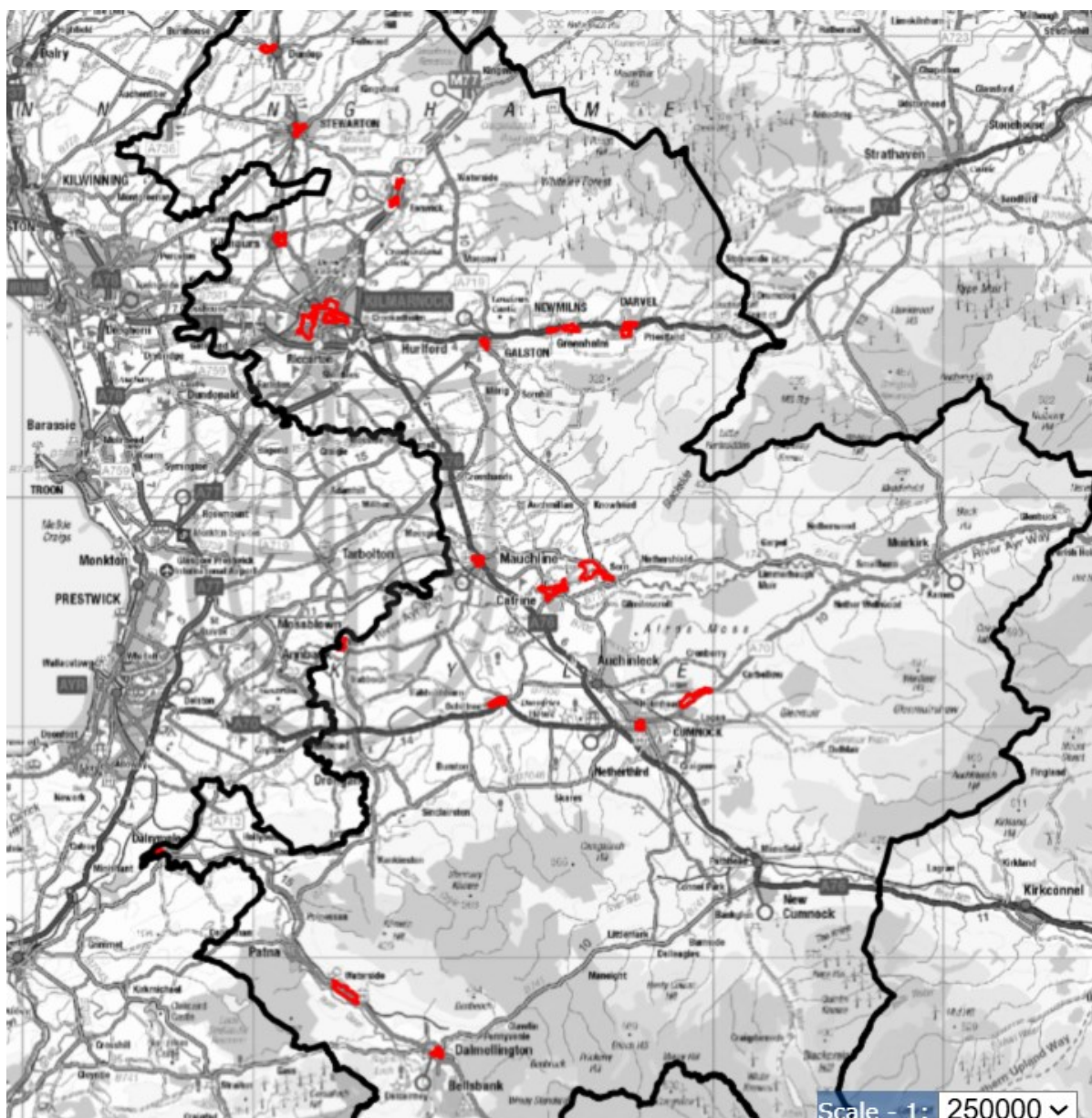


300066985	Former Clydesdale Bank, Kilmarnock – listing request	<a href="#"><u>Former Clydesdale Bank, 30 Foregate, Kilmarnock (300066985)</u></a>
300073334	Dovecote, Treesbank, Ayr Road – removal request	<a href="#"><u>DOVECOTE, TREESBANK (East Ayrshire, LB18512) (300073334)</u></a>
300073335	Stables, Treesbank, Ayr Road – removal request	<a href="#"><u>AYR ROAD, STABLES AT TREESBANK (East Ayrshire, LB35874) (300073335)</u></a>
300076415	Find-me-Out Cottage, Craigengillan Estate, Dalmellington	<a href="#"><u>Find-me-Out Cottage, Craigengillan Estate, Dalmellington (300076415)</u></a>
300076416	Forget-me-Not Cottage, Craigengillan Estate, Dalmellington	<a href="#"><u>Forget-me-Not Cottage, Craigengillan Estate, Dalmellington (300076416)</u></a>
300076417	Home Farmhouse, Craigengillan Home Farm, Craigengillan Estate, Dalmellington	<a href="#"><u>Home Farmhouse, Craigengillan Home Farm, Craigengillan Estate, Dalmellington (300076417)</u></a>
300076418	Curling Pond, Craigengillan Estate, Dalmellington	<a href="#"><u>Curling Pond, Craigengillan Estate, Dalmellington (300076418)</u></a>

### 5.3. Conservation Areas

5.3.1. There are 26 Conservation Areas in East Ayrshire, located across 18 settlements, with maps of each area available on the Council website ([Conservation areas - East Ayrshire Council](#)):

- Catrine
- Cumnock
- Dalmellington
- Dalrymple
- Darvel
- Dunlop
- Fenwick and Laigh Fenwick
- Galston
- Kilmarnock
- Kilmaurs
- Lugar
- Mauchline
- Newmilns
- Ochiltree
- Sorn
- Stair
- Stewarton
- Waterside (Doon Valley)



Map: East Ayrshire's Conservation Areas

- 5.3.2. Conservation Area Appraisals have been produced for Kilmarnock, Cumnock, Galston, Dalmellington, Waterside (Doon Valley), Mauchline, Catrine and (in 2025) Stewarton. Per the recommendations in the recent Stewarton Conservation Area Appraisal, and following public consultation, the Conservation Area boundary was extended to include more of the historic centre of the town of Stewarton.
- 5.3.3. In accordance with Planning Advice Note 71 (PAN 71), the designation of a Conservation Area should not be regarded "...principally as a means of increasing control, but rather as a commitment to take positive action to safeguard and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area". Conservation Area Appraisals support the purpose

of Conservation Areas by identifying the features that are worthy of preservation and articulating the link between the historical context of the area and the built form. A Conservation Area Appraisal therefore helps to create an understanding of not only how the historic character of buildings and streetscapes can be protected in their current state, but also what actions could be taken through new development to authentically reinforce and enhance the character of the area.

5.3.4. Some of East Ayrshire's Conservation Areas are protected by additional planning regulations in the form of Article 4 Directions, which remove some or all of the permitted development rights and mean that planning permission will be mandatory for some types of development that would not otherwise have required it. Directions can cover a variety of minor works and might include: the display of advertisements, the replacement of doors and windows, the erection of gates, fences, garages, sheds, porches, storage tanks or the installation of satellite antennae.

5.3.5. The following are Conservation Areas with Article 4 Directions in place:

- Cumnock
- Kilmarnock (John Finnie Street and Bank Street)
- Mauchline
- Newmilns

## 5.4. **Scheduled Monuments, Battlefields and Archaeological Sites**

5.4.1. As of June 2025, there were 28 Scheduled Monuments in East Ayrshire and 1 Inventory Battlefield (the site of the Battle of Loudoun Hill).<sup>2</sup>

5.4.2. Some notable Scheduled Monuments include:

- Ballochmyle bronze age rock carvings
- Auchinleck castle
- Doon Castle

5.4.3. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) maintains the Historic Environment Record (HER) for twelve local planning authorities, including East Ayrshire Council. The HER is a complete record of all known archaeological sites, finds, fieldwork and research and can

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<sup>2</sup> HES

be accessed via a database or map search to provide information and advice on potential archaeological issues raised by development proposals.

## 5.5. Gardens and Designed Landscapes

5.5.1. Gardens and Designed Landscapes have intrinsic value as part of the historic environment and also play a role in providing local opportunities for recreation, education, employment and tourism. Some of the sites in East Ayrshire have been recognised as being of national importance, and are therefore included in Historic Environment Scotland (HES)'s Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes ('Inventory' sites); 'Non-Inventory' sites are those which are not on the list maintained by HES, but have nevertheless been identified by the Council as having local importance.

5.5.2. There are 8 Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes either fully or partially located in East Ayrshire<sup>3</sup> and a further 30 Non-Inventory sites. Each of the Inventory sites has been evaluated by HES under 7 categories of interest (Artistic, Historical, Horticultural, Architectural, Archaeological, Scenic and Nature Conservation) and classified on a scale from 'little', to 'some', to 'high', to 'outstanding' interest for each.

5.5.3. The 8 Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes are:

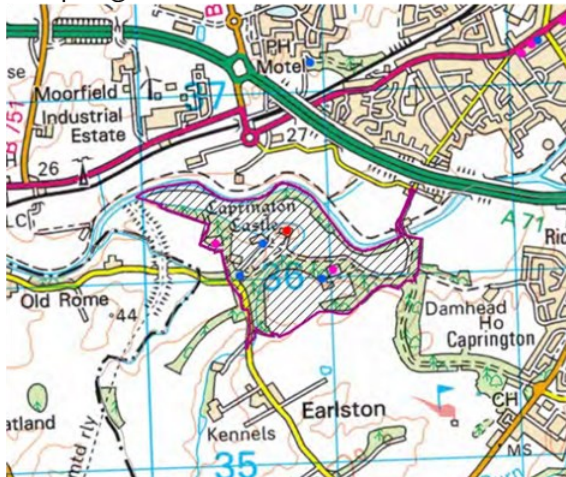
- **Caprington Castle** (GDL00084) – Located to the south-west of Kilmarnock and identified as having outstanding architectural interest.
- **Carnell** (GDL00087) – Carnell House is located in South Ayrshire, but part of the estate's associated landscape is in East Ayrshire. It has outstanding artistic, horticultural and architectural interest.

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<sup>3</sup> HES



Caprington Castle

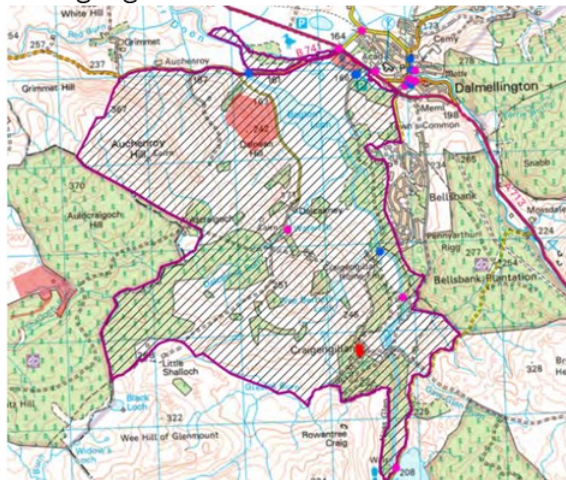


Carnell

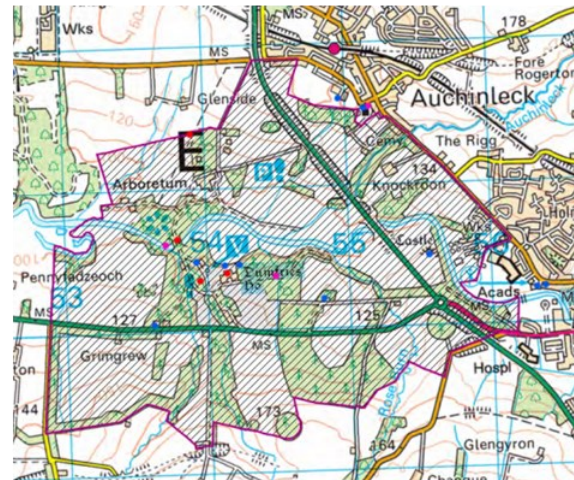


- **Craigengillan** (GDL00111) – Located near Dalmellington, the Craigengillan estate is ranked as being ‘outstanding’ across all seven interest categories.
- **Dumfries House** (GDL00149) – The house and estate, located near Cumnock and Auchinleck, have outstanding historical, architectural and scenic interest.

Craigengillan



Dumfries House



- **Lanfne** (GDL00252) – An estate between Newmilns and Darvel with outstanding scenic interest.
- **Loudoun Castle** (GDL00269) – Loudoun Castle estate, to the north of Galston, is rated as having outstanding historical and scenic interest.



Lanfine

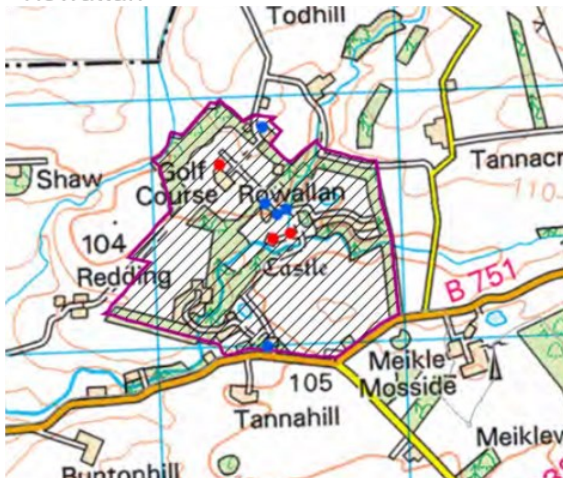


Loudoun Castle



- **Rowallan** (GDL00333) – Located between Fenwick and Kilmaurs, Rowallan has outstanding historical and architectural interest.
- **Skeldon** (GDL00342) – Skeldon, near Dalrymple, is classed as having high artistic and architectural interest.

Rowallan



Skeldon



#### 5.5.4. The Non-Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes are:

- |                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| • Auchinleck          | • Dalgain     |
| • Ballochmyle         | • Dallars     |
| • Barskimming         | • Dean Castle |
| • Camlarg             | • Drongan     |
| • Cessnock            | • Dunlop      |
| • Craig House         | • Glaisnock   |
| • Craufurdland Castle | • Glenbuck    |
| • Daldorch            | • Grimmet     |



- Hollybush House
- Kiers Castle
- Kingencleugh
- Lainshaw
- Logan
- Martnaham
- Milrig
- Montgreenan
- Smithstone
- Sorn
- Stair
- Sundrum (South Ayrshire)
- Thornton
- Treesbank

5.5.5. Alongside Local Development Plan 2, the Council produced [Non-Statutory Planning Guidance on Gardens and Designed Landscapes](#), with detailed profiles on each of the Inventory and Non-Inventory sites, including maps and photographs. This Guidance was adopted in April 2025 following public consultation on a Draft document. Each site has a detailed profile describing its location, the quality of its features, its historical significance and its key landscape components. The rating system used by Historic Environment Scotland for Inventory sites was also adapted for use with each of East Ayrshire's Non-Inventory sites, to highlight their unique characteristics. The production of this guidance document has significantly increased the Council's knowledge and understanding of the gardens and designed landscapes and provides a sound framework for the preparation and consideration of any potential development proposal that may come forward in any of these sites.

5.5.6. A separate piece of Supplementary Guidance has been produced for Loudoun Castle and Estate, recognising the site's development potential for tourism and setting out a vision for how any such development could be undertaken sensitively and with a view to ensuring the long-term future of the castle, garden and designed landscape.

## 5.6. Buildings at Risk

5.6.1. The [Buildings at Risk Register](#) (BARR) for Scotland has been in operation since 1990 and highlights properties of architectural or historic merit that are considered to be at risk. Buildings at risk are not necessarily in poor condition, they may simply be standing empty with no clear future use or be threatened with demolition.

5.6.2. Historic Environment Scotland published a review of the BARR in September 2024 and the report found that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the BARR has a significant impact in bringing buildings back into use. HES has therefore taken the decision

to pause the BARR in order to consider long-term options for its future – this means that although the existing BARR website will remain accessible as a resource, it will not be updated with new information.

5.6.3. As of June 2025, 2,214 buildings were on the BARR, of which 38 were located in East Ayrshire. 35 of these buildings are classified as ‘At Risk’ whilst 3 of the entries are listed as ‘Restoration in Progress’.

5.6.4. The table below shows the number of buildings at risk in East Ayrshire towns and how this number compares to other Scottish towns of a similar population size.<sup>4</sup>

Town	Resident population	Number of buildings at risk	How does the number compare to similar towns in Scotland per head of population?
Kilmarnock	46,159	9	More
Cumnock	9,039	3	Fewer
Dalmellington/Burnton	1,411	0	Fewer
Galston	4,670	3	More
Stewarton	7,065	1	Fewer
Auchinleck	3,819	0	Fewer
Catrine	2,236	2	More
Crosshouse	2,861	0	Fewer
Darvel	3,871	5	More
Hurlford/Crookedholm	4,846	0	Fewer
Kilmaurs	2,833	2	More
Mauchline	4,099	1	More
Muirkirk	1,528	0	Fewer
New Cumnock	2,860	0	Fewer
Newmilns	3,053	6	More

5.6.5. Since 1990, 59 buildings have been saved with 36 recorded demolitions.

5.6.6. The comparative saved to lost rate in East Ayrshire is around 3 buildings saved for every 2 that are lost, which compares to the national rate of 3 sites saved for every 1 lost. An example of a saved site is the former Portland Arms Hotel at 2 Cross Street in Galston. This

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<sup>4</sup> STP - USP

has now been reused as a Community Facility, Office of the Galston Development Community Trust and various small businesses.

- 5.6.7. There may be disused heritage buildings in East Ayrshire that do not appear on the Register. Evidence gathered within the Vacant and Derelict Land Register, SPAB Thatched Building Survey, and the Empty Homes service can help identify these sites.
- 5.6.8. Additionally, the Church of Scotland's extensive estate review may result in more churches becoming redundant in East Ayrshire. As the disposal of churches in ecclesiastical use gathers momentum, HES have advised that more domestic/community use conversion schemes for churches may come forward in the Council area. Around eleven places of worship have been identified by HES as being considered for disposal within East Ayrshire by 2027; nine of these proposed disposals are listed and some have already closed. The Category A Listed Catrine Parish Church was up for sale in June 2025 and is now under offer.



Photo: Catrine Parish Church (from property listings on [Church of Scotland](#) website)

## 5.7. Undesignated Historic Assets

- 5.7.1. In Historic Environment Scotland's five-year national strategy for the historic environment ('Our Past, Our Future') it is noted that, as of May 2023, Scotland had over 58,000 designations, but 95% of Scotland's historic environment was undesignated.
- 5.7.2. Undesignated assets are historic buildings, structures and sites which are not listed, but which nevertheless are part of the historical legacy and cultural heritage of a place. The reason historic assets exist without the protection of listings or other designations is that, to achieve official designation and recognition by Historic Environment Scotland, an asset must meet the criteria for historic, cultural and/or architectural significance – age alone does not qualify a building for listing and therefore some unlisted structures may even be older than their listed counterparts.
- 5.7.3. Some of East Ayrshire's undesignated historic assets will be included within Conservation Areas or Gardens and Designed Landscapes and therefore will be protected as part of the overall character of a historic street or landscape, but many will not be – in such cases robust design policies and guidance for all forms of development are required to ensure that built heritage is enhanced rather than lost in the course of new development.

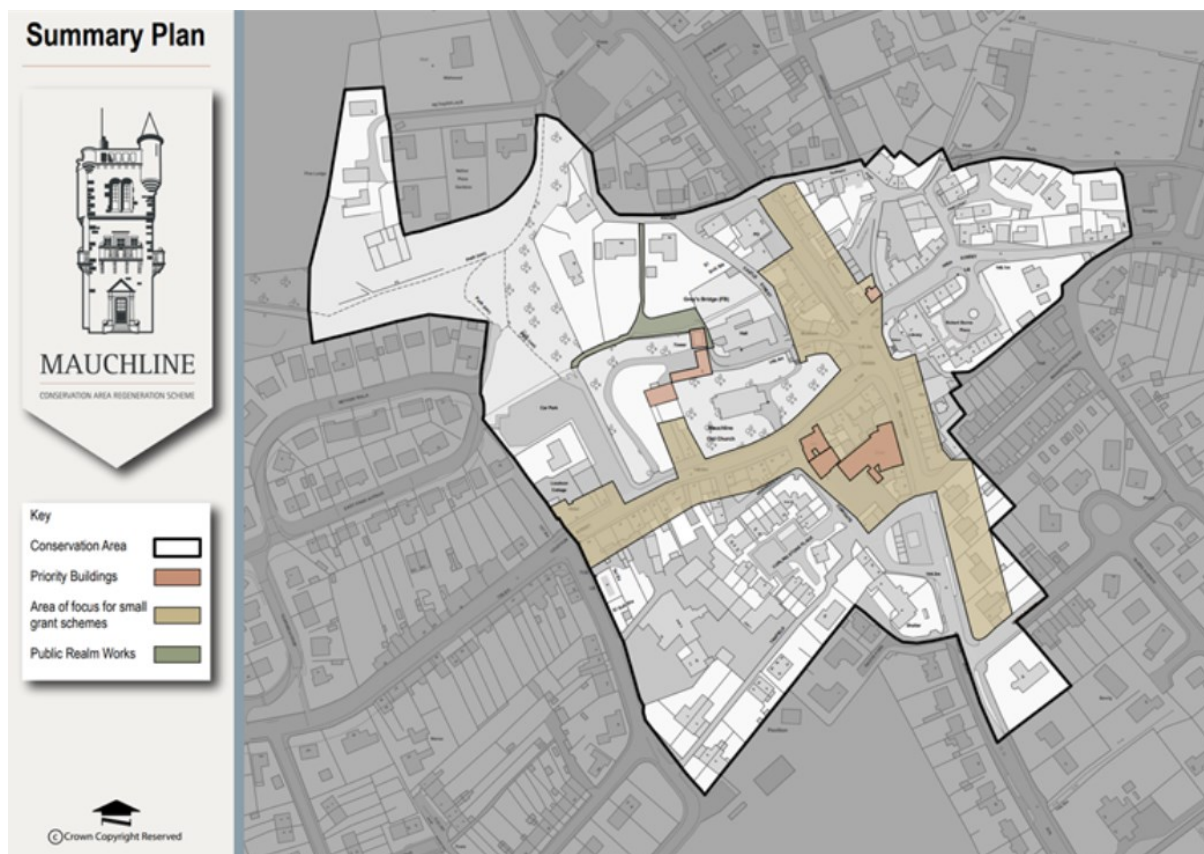
## 5.8. Regenerating Our Historic Environment.

- 5.8.1. In East Ayrshire, several heritage-led regeneration projects have made tangible improvements to both our historic environment and the quality of place in our communities. In many instances, these have been actively supported by the existing and previous Local Developments Plans. These include:
- **Regenerating the rural landscape** - The Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership (CCLP) is a £6 million multi-partner project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), with project delivery carried out by a range of community groups across the former coalfield area. The partnership, due to finish by March 2026, has delivered 22 natural and cultural heritage projects, under the overall theme of reconnecting communities with their landscape. Of particular relevance to the historic environment, the partnership has supported the delivery of a new pocket park in the Cumnock Conservation Area, the creation of a heritage centre within the C listed Lugar church and the creation of a new engine shed to help secure the long term future of the Doon Valley Railway and the former Dalmellington ironworks, a scheduled ancient



monument. The Minerals Local Development Plan 2020, and the current Local Development Plan 2024, both supported the implementation of the CCLP, with specific support within the spatial strategy and policies of the Plans. In particular, the support for the partnership within the Minerals Plan was instrumental in achieving the NLHF funding, demonstrating a clear link between planning policy and delivery on the ground.

- **Regenerating conservation areas** - A number of Historic Environment Scotland funded Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS) have been successfully delivered across East Ayrshire, within Kilmarnock, Cumnock, Galston and, currently in operation, Mauchline. The Mauchline CARS is due to complete in March 2026 and will have delivered clear benefits to the built heritage of the town through public realm improvements and repair/refurbishment of 8 key buildings within the conservation area.



Map: Mauchline Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (from [Mauchline CARS](#))

- **Regenerating listed buildings** – Beginning in 2021, the Category B Listed former Grange Church in Kilmarnock underwent a two-year regeneration project with the

Regeneration Capital Grant Fund contributing £2.469M to the overall approximate cost of £4.5M. The resulting development – ‘Above Adventure’ – is Ayrshire’s first indoor climbing centre and it first opened its doors on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Another high-profile regeneration project which commenced in 2025 involves the Category A Listed Palace Theatre and Grand Hall, and will see extensive refurbishment and an extension to the building’s frontage. The works to the Palace Theatre are scheduled to be complete by the middle of 2028.

- **Regenerating gardens and designed landscapes** – The current and previous LDPs recognise(d) the value of East Ayrshire’s GDLs, both as heritage and tourism assets. LDP2 gives special recognition to the value of Loudoun Castle and Estate, both as an important heritage asset, but also as one that can be maximised as a driver for economic growth. The site, containing the B listed castle and the Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape, is allocated as a development opportunity site for tourism, leisure and tourism accommodation purposes, with the potential for the site to significantly contribute to both the local Irvine Valley and wider Ayrshire economy.
- **Regenerating Kilmarnock town centre** – Kilmarnock has been allocated £20 million in funds from the UK Government under the ‘Plan for Neighbourhoods’ (previously the Levelling Up ‘Long-Term Plan for Towns’ initiative). The Kilmarnock Neighbourhood Board (also known as We Make Kilmarnock) is developing a regeneration plan in partnership with East Ayrshire Council to deliver the strategic objectives of the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme. There is an opportunity to include investment in and improvements to the historic built environment of the town as part of this project and associated funding streams, including investigating options for bringing vacant listed properties back into productive use.

## 6. Implications for Proposed Plan

- 6.1. Local Development Plan 3 will be required to continue to support the protection and enhancement of the designated and undesignated historic assets in East Ayrshire, and to complement the strategies and policies set out by Historic Environment Scotland.
- 6.2. Some key issues to address in the proposed plan include:



- Undertaking Conservation Area Appraisals for the Conservation Areas which have not recently been appraised, and ensuring that the unique characteristics of all Conservation Areas are considered within the place-based policies of the proposed plan. A response provided by Historic Environment Scotland to the recent consultation on Stewarton Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) made the recommendation that the Council should continue working to provide CAAs for the remainder of East Ayrshire's Conservation Areas. The purpose of a CAA is to identify the key features which determine the special significance of the Conservation Area, providing a framework for the controlled and positive management of change and forming an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Up-to-date appraisals for all Conservation Areas in East Ayrshire would support the creation of robust policies for protecting and enhancing the character of these areas in the next Local Development Plan.
- Adopting a proactive approach to considering the long-term options for historic buildings which are already vacant or are at risk of falling out of use (such as church buildings). It is important to consider the challenges and opportunities that these sites may offer in terms of the communities in which they are situated and the services that they require. This work should also be integrated with wider regeneration projects (including the Kilmarnock town centre project) and action to address vacant and derelict land. A key challenge will be for the Plan to help maintain momentum in terms of heritage led regeneration schemes in an increasingly challenging funding landscape.
- Ensuring that the value placed on historic buildings, structures and landscapes is not limited to statutory designations and that historic character is considered within a holistic approach to placemaking. Non-designated historic assets are given protection in Local Development Plan 2 under Policy HE3. However, as Local Development Plan 3 will be East Ayrshire's first 'new-style' plan, there could be an opportunity to consider the historic assets and features as part of the Place Profiles that will be compiled for each settlement. As set out in section 5.8, built heritage plays a significant role in regeneration, both in the sense of regenerating historic assets themselves and in returning a sense of place and cultural heritage to communities as part of sensitively-designed new development. Local Development Plan 3 will need to continue to promote high design standards for new development that will preserve and enhance the unique character of East Ayrshire's places.

## 7. Data Sources

**7.1.** The sources of data used by East Ayrshire Council to analyse the Historic Environment topic are set out below:

Dataset	Source	Reason for use	Links to Evidence
Conservation Areas	HES / EAC	Historic environment designation within EAC boundary	Internal GIS system; Published on the Council's online mapping service: <a href="https://webgis.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/webgis2016/">https://webgis.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/webgis2016/</a>  Historic Environment Scotland's online mapping service: <a href="#">Designations Map Search</a>
Listed Buildings	HES / EAC	Historic environment designation within EAC boundary	Internal GIS system; Published on the Council's online mapping service: <a href="https://webgis.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/webgis2016/">https://webgis.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/webgis2016/</a>  Historic Environment Scotland's online mapping service: <a href="#">Designations Map Search</a>
Scheduled Monuments	HES / EAC	Historic environment designation within EAC boundary	Internal GIS system; Published on the Council's online mapping service: <a href="https://webgis.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/webgis2016/">https://webgis.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/webgis2016/</a>  Historic Environment Scotland's online mapping service: <a href="#">Designations Map Search</a>
Sites of Archaeological Significance	HES / EAC	Historic environment designation within EAC boundary	Internal GIS system; Published on the Council's online mapping service: <a href="https://webgis.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/webgis2016/">https://webgis.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/webgis2016/</a>  Historic Environment Scotland's online mapping service: <a href="#">Designations Map Search</a>
West of Scotland Archaeology Service	WoSAS	Archaeological records for East Ayrshire	<a href="https://www.wosas.net/index.html">https://www.wosas.net/index.html</a>
Gardens and Designed Landscapes	HES / EAC	Historic environment designation within EAC boundary	Internal GIS system; Published on the Council's online mapping service: <a href="https://webgis.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/webgis2016/">https://webgis.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/webgis2016/</a>  Historic Environment Scotland's online mapping service: <a href="#">Designations Map Search</a>

			East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 Gardens and Designed Landscape Non-Statutory Planning Guidance: <a href="https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/L/ldp2-gardens-and-designed-landscapes.pdf">https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/L/ldp2-gardens-and-designed-landscapes.pdf</a>
Trove – online archive	HES	Historic Environment Scotland's updated designation search	<a href="https://www.trove.scot/">https://www.trove.scot/</a>
Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland	HES	Lists properties of architectural or historic merit that are considered to be at risk.	<a href="#">Buildings at Risk Register</a>
Our Past, Our Future	HES	Five-year national strategy for Scotland's historic environment	<a href="https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=79204155-9eb2-4d29-ab14-aff200ec2801">https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=79204155-9eb2-4d29-ab14-aff200ec2801</a>
Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS)	HES	Non-statutory material planning guidance produced by Historic Environment Scotland.	<a href="https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/historic-environment-policy-for-scotland-heps/">https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/historic-environment-policy-for-scotland-heps/</a>

## 8. Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

### 8.1. Recent Public Consultations

- 8.1.1. Two public consultations on planning policy documents related to the historic environment have been carried out in 2025 – the Gardens and Designed Landscapes Non-Statutory Planning Guidance and the Stewarton Conservation Area Appraisal. The supportive responses to the latter of these consultations has resulted in the decision to extend Stewarton Conservation Area boundary to encompass more of Stewarton's historic heart.

## **8.2. Local Development Plan 3 Early Engagement**

- 8.2.1. Early engagement for Local Development Plan 3 has been designed around the Place Standard tool, with a public survey asking East Ayrshire residents about the aspects of their 'Place' that they feel positively about, or where they feel there may be areas for improvement. Although the survey is ongoing and analysis of the responses has not yet been undertaken, some initial feedback has highlighted the desire of communities to see historic buildings maintained and in use, and a high number of the responses have demonstrated a strong affection among the public for local parks and public spaces – many of which are part of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, or include other historic assets as part of their setting.

## **8.3. Key Agencies**

- 8.3.1. This Topic Paper includes information provided directly by Historic Environment Scotland.